

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Dead Guy Summer // Martin Luther
Pastor Marcus
June 11, 2023

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What's a song you've been listening to a lot recently?

Reading: Galatians 2:15-21

Outline:

- I. The Problem of Sin (v. 15-16)
 - A. Paul identifies that God's Law itself is good because it reveals God's will and provides instruction for us. However, the problem is our sin and the fact that we can't keep the law.
 - B. Martin Luther was concerned with the concept of assurance and realized he couldn't ultimately find it in his legal studies or philosophy. "The Law says, 'Do this,' and it is never done." -Luther
Q: Do you ever find yourself seeking for assurance?
- II. The Purpose of the Law (v. 17-19)
 - A. "The commandments do indeed teach good things, but the things taught do not come to pass as soon as they are taught, because commandments show us what we ought to do but do not give us the power of doing. They are established to this end, to show a human being to himself, so that through them he may recognize his incapacity for the good and may despair of his own powers." -Martin Luther
Q: Has this explanation of the law changed how you view the law at all?
- III. The Gift of the Gospel (v. 20)
 - A. Righteousness is not about following a new law, but about being joined to Jesus. Righteousness means clinging to Jesus through faith and being united to him through our faith.
 - B. Because we don't have to obsess over living to earn our own righteousness, we can live our lives in freedom. "All our works are to be directed to the wellbeing of others, since through his faith each is so rich that all other works and his whole life are a surplus with which he may serve and benefit to his neighbor in voluntary benevolence." -Martin Luther
Q: How do you live for others in 'voluntary benevolence'?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How can we avoid living as though we have to fulfill the law rather than just follow it?
- 2) How can we "despair at our own powers" without losing our sense of self-worth?
- 3) How can we be sure we are united to Jesus through faith?
- 4) How can we make all of our works directed towards others, as Luther says?

Suggestion for further study:

- Romans 3:19-28 Q: How do these verses further elaborate on how we should understand the law?
- 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 Q: How do these verses relate to Luther's quote about living for others?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, you have given us everything that we need, and more. You've given it to us through your Son Jesus, who is our righteousness and source of our strength. Please empower us and teach us to look to Jesus and see our worth. Strengthen us to bring your word into the world. Amen.